

“Why Communion is so Important” Part 2 - 1 Corinthians 11:23-28 – October 25th, 2015

- Today's teaching will be part two of a new series we began last week titled, “Why Communion is so Important.”
- Because the church in Corinth was having so many problems, especially surrounding the Communion Paul has to rebuke them.
- It seems the problems were specifically related to what's known as the Agape Feasts, which was a meal with the communion.

Of these Agape Feasts or, if you prefer, Love Feasts, one commentator wrote, “It is likely that in the first century the Lord's Supper was part of a larger meal, the love feast, where fellowship was expressed, and the poor were fed.

- While these Love Feasts were meant to bring the church together in fellowship, it seems they were doing the exact opposite.
- Instead of drawing them closer together as a body of believers the communion table was driving them further apart as a church.
- So much so that some of them were turning the Love Feasts and the Lord's Supper into a drunken party together in cliques.

- It's for this reason that this problem had become so serious such that the Corinthian Christians were profaning the Lord's Table.
- It's important to understand that culturally, even to this day, breaking bread together is seen as the forming of a bond together.
- This is why it is the gospels are replete with accounts of the Savior Himself eating with His disciples and feeding the multitudes.

- I would suggest that the Corinthian Christians in their selfish carnality had diminished and even disgraced the communion table.
- This because they no longer understood the importance of what the Lord's Table was all about namely, a union in Jesus Christ.
- As I mentioned last week, I'm hoping this series will clear up much of the confusion surrounding the importance of communion.

1. It's a revelation of those whom God approves (Verses 17-19)

- Paul says they're doing more harm than good, and the divisions among them show them which of them have God's approval.

2. It's a unification of the body of Christ (Verses 20-22)

- Here Paul rebukes them for eating in small groups, which resulted in some remaining hungry while others were getting drunk.

3. It's a commemoration of what Jesus did for us (Verses 23-25)

- v23 Paul says as he received from the Lord, he also passed on to them; The Lord Jesus, the night he was betrayed took bread.
- v24 Paul says when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, “This is my body broken for you, do this in remembrance of me.
- v25 Then in the same way He took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, in remembrance of me.”

- I'd like to draw your attention to two key words that we would do well to emphasize here, the first of which is the word “broken.”
- The second is the word “remembrance,” but I will start with the word “broken” in the context of the bread as the body of Christ.
- The reason being is that meekness and humility comes vis-à-vis brokenness, which is the antithesis of pride and arrogance.

- Actually, this ties into our second word, “remembrance,” which Jesus says twice as it relates to both the bread and the cup.
- Now, here's where I'm going with this, Jesus in His meekness and brokenness, humbled Himself when He went to the cross.
- As such He gave this ordinance to do in remembrance of what He did because He knows that in our pride we're prone to forget.

- Such was the case with the Corinthian Christians, in the sense that, in their pride and arrogance, they had remained unbroken.
- I suppose this may explain why there were so many factions and divisions amongst them surrounding, of all things communion.
- That which was to be a commemoration of unity in Christ and the humility of Christ had become riddled with pride and divisions.

- I'm of the belief that the Corinthian Christians were, for the most part, a body of believers who had never really been broken.
- The reason I say that is because, unless and until we as Christians are truly broken we'll never taste from the cup of humility.
- I'll take it a step further and say unless and until we as Christians die to ourselves, we'll never taste from the sweet cup of unity.

4. It's a proclamation of the Lord's death until He returns (Verses 26-28)

- v26 Paul says that whenever we eat this bread and drink this cup, it's a proclamation of the Lord's death until He comes again.
- v27 So whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup in an unworthy manner is guilty of sinning against the body and blood of Christ.
- v28 He then says it's for this reason everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup.

- In order to understand what Paul is saying about partaking in an unworthy manner, we must first know what he's not saying.
- He is not saying that if we sinned last night or this morning we can't partake because if that were the case, none of us would.
- That would be like saying that, you need to clean up before you take a bath, or else you would do so in an unworthy manner.

I like how one commentator said it, On the basis of this passage, many think they are unworthy to partake of Communion if they are struggling with a certain sin or wrestling with a particular temptation. Yet this reasoning would be equivalent to — a doctor saying to a sick person, “Get well, and then come and see me,” or a loan officer saying to a poor person, “You need a loan? Get some money, and then I can help you”...

- So what does it mean to partake unworthily? There are two ways, the first of which is when one is not a born again believer.
- However, if they call on the Lord and are saved, then they are worthy to partake by virtue of they're righteousness in Christ.
- The second way one can partake unworthily is to do so as a born again believer who is unrepentant and living in willful sin.

- The common denominator between these two scenarios is that both are incompatible with what the bread and cup represent.
- This is why Paul says we need to examine ourselves as to whether or not I'm living in a way that is consistent with Christ's life.
- Next week, is the final part in this series, and we'll partake together of communion as we do on the first Sunday of the month.